

Offender Handbook

Introduction

You have been released by a judge on probation or by the Kentucky Parole Board on parole. One of the conditions of your release is that you be supervised for a period by the Division of Probation and Parole. During this supervision period, the Division of Probation and Parole will make every effort to help you succeed in beating bad habits, turning your life around, and becoming a productive member of society.

As you can see by our mission statement, we plan to do this in two ways. First, we will supervise you proactively. That means that we will make every effort to regularly assess risks and needs so that you receive as much supervision as needed to guide you through your supervision period without problems. Second, we will refer you to community resources for assistance. This may mean attending treatment programs and classes to address specific needs that you may have.

This offender handbook has been created with materials from officers to help you understand what is going on. Supervision can be confusing and difficult. It gets worse if you have no clue what to expect, how to act, or what is expected of you. This handbook will guide you through the process and help you succeed.

The bottom line is: if you succeed, we succeed. Therefore, it is our goal to give you the help you need to succeed. What you do with that help is up to you.

Conditions of Supervision

When you first reported to your officer, you signed a document called the Conditions of Supervision. The conditions listed on that document are exactly what you must do in order to successfully complete your supervision period. You should have been given a copy of this document. If something happens and you have to go back to court or to the parole board, it will be because you somehow violated those conditions. If you do not understand the conditions, please ask your officer to explain them to you. Since you have signed that document, failure to understand each condition will not keep you from serious punishment if you violate the conditions. Some people push their luck and think they can bend these rules without breaking them. This causes serious problems in the long run. Know the rules and follow them.

Your Supervision Plan

When you first reported to your officer, you signed a document called the Client Profile. On the bottom of this profile was an area that your officer completed listing specific objectives that you must accomplish in order to successfully complete supervision. Your officer should have discussed these with you and asked you for input on how you could best achieve these objectives. You should have been given a copy of this document. Refer to it when you have questions about what you need to be doing. If you do not understand or if circumstances change, notify your officer so that changes can be made to help you accomplish your objectives.

Assessment

Either when you first reported or shortly afterward, your officer completed a risk assessment on you. This risk assessment tells Division of Probation and Parole staff exactly what level of supervision you need to be given. It also lets us know how well you are responding to treatment and adjustment in the community. The officer will reassess you periodically to update your risks and needs. This risk score determines how often you must make contact with your officer and what privileges the officer may decide to give you. The score takes into account many things including: employment, new crimes, criminal history, who you associate with, how well you do in treatment, and whether you use drugs or alcohol during supervision. The best way to make sure your score is correct is by being honest and open with your officer and keeping him informed of changes as they occur.

Contact Information

Each office has a duty officer during business hours. This duty officer is available to help you if your officer is not available. If you need help Monday – Friday from 8 AM -4:30 PM and cannot contact your officer, ask to speak to the duty officer.

Your officer is required to give you a number where he or she may be reached after hours. We are here to help you around the clock if you have an emergency. If your officer has not given you a number to contact him after hours, be sure to ask and find out what that number is. It is important that you contact us when you need help.

Reporting to Your Officer

Not reporting to your officer as scheduled is the fastest way to get in serious trouble. If your officer doesn't know what you are doing, the officer cannot help you get through your probation/parole period. Each time you report, your officer will give you the next date for you to report. If the officer does not give you a next report day, ask them for one. Report days often get crazy due to unexpected events. Plan to wait for your officer if he is not available immediately. If you cannot see your officer on your assigned report day, call your officer immediately. Let them know why you can't report and make arrangements for another report day. It is your responsibility to see your officer, not his responsibility to find you.

Preparing to Meet with Your Officer

Your officer will give you a day to report to the office or another location to meet with him. You must report that day unless you make other arrangements with your officer. Children are not allowed in the Probation and Parole office or any lobby areas. Family members, friends, attorneys, or other persons are not allowed to come with you when you report unless you have permission from your officer prior to report day. If they have driven you to the office, they should wait outside or pick you up when you are done.

You may be searched while reporting to your officer. Do not bring cell phones, pagers, food, drinks, walkmans, radios, or other unnecessary items with you. You don't want to bring any items with you that are violations of your conditions or may appear to be violations of your conditions such as: loose tobacco, clothing that depicts drug or gang activity, etc.

You should dress appropriately. No baggie or sagging pants will be allowed. No gang related clothing will be allowed. All hats should be removed before entering the office or other area. Clothes should be as clean and neat as possible.

Meeting with Your Officer

When you meet with your officer, be prepared to do business. Sometimes report days get extremely crazy. Most often, this is because people do not come prepared. Your officer will want certain information and documents from you each time you see him. Bring the following things:

1. A current identification card or driver's license
2. Proof of a new address if you are reporting one
3. A current check stub, social security check stub, or other proof of employment
4. Verification that you are attending treatment such as receipts, AA forms, certificates, etc.
5. Restitution and fine payments or receipts
6. Supervision fees or receipts
7. Any citations, tickets, or summons you have recently received

Your officer may ask you for other information. Be sure you bring proof of anything you are reporting to your officer.

When meeting with your officer, do not lie to him. He has ways of checking everything you report to him. Honesty about something that is wrong is better than lying to cover it up and letting the officer find out later.

Fees

You may be required to pay fees and other money based upon your court order or parole certificate. These include supervision fee, restitution, Crime Victim's Fund fee, and drug testing fee. The fees that you must pay will be clearly outlined in your conditions of supervision document and your officer will instruct you where and how to pay them. If you bring fees to your officer, you must bring money orders only. The Division of Probation and Parole does not accept cash or checks.

Drug Testing

You may be tested at anytime while on supervision. The best way to prepare for a test is to BE CLEAN. While some people think there are great ways to "beat" a test, there are none. The time it takes any drug to leave your body depends on many variables that you can't control such as weight and metabolism. Your officer is trained to know when someone is "cheating" on a test. This type of activity is not only a violation of your conditions of supervision, it is a class D felony and can get you in serious trouble.

When you are scheduled to meet with your officer, always be prepared to take a drug test. If you cannot urinate when asked, you will be given two hours to do so. You have to stay with the officer or in the office while he waits. Failure to produce a sample after two hours can have serious consequences.

Where You Live

Where you live is very important to your success on supervision. Living with the wrong people or with bad situations can set you up to fail. You must give your officer one residence where you will be living. You cannot change that residence without approval from your officer. "Living" means that you are there every night sleeping, eating, and carrying on your daily activities. Your officer may allow you to stay at another location for short periods, but this must be approved by the officer BEFORE it happens.

Home Visits

Your officer is required to visit your home regularly based upon your assessment score. It is your responsibility to make sure your officer has access to your home. Let everyone in your house know that if the officer comes, they should let him in. We want to make sure that you are complying with your conditions and that nothing in your house is setting you up for failure. This is easiest to do when everyone in your house is willing to cooperate with the officer. If someone in your family refuses to let the officer in, you may suffer the consequences. If the officer misses you when visiting, he will leave a card for you. It is important that you contact the officer as soon as you get the card.

Travel

When you signed the conditions of supervision, your officer specified an area that you were allowed to move freely in, known as your "area of supervision." Any travel outside of that area must be approved by your officer. This has to be done in writing. If you must travel, contact your officer immediately with all of the information such as: where you are going, who you are going with, how you will get there, where you will stay, when you are leaving, and when you will return. The officer will review the request and decide if you can travel.

Treatment

The court, the parole board, or your officer may order you to attend treatment programs for all kinds of issues such as drugs, anger, and parenting skills. When you are sent to treatment, it is important that you attend regularly. Missing classes can get you kicked out of the program and lead to serious problems. Many programs charge a fee for you to attend. You must pay the fee each time you go or make arrangements to pay the fee over time. If you complete the program but owe money, the provider may not give you the proof needed to satisfy your conditions of supervision. You have not completed the treatment until your officer receives proof.

Sometimes, you may have issues that your officer is not aware of. Talk with him about what you need. A list of community resources that address all kinds of situations is available from your officer.

Working

Your conditions say you must work. Failure to keep a job will always lead to more serious problems. If you have a job, make sure your employer knows that you have to report to your officer when requested. Keep your employer informed of what is going on so they do not get upset and fire you.

If you don't have a job, you should get one quickly. Don't buy the lie that no one hires felons. That is not true. Many employers will hire felons, especially if you are honest with them up front. The

office you are supervised out of has lists of available jobs in your area. If you have trouble with the list, ask for help.

When looking for a job, make sure it is one that can be verified. Jobs working for family or jobs that pay “under the table” will not meet your conditions of supervision. The easiest way to verify a job is with a check stub. If you cannot provide verification, your officer will have to contact your employer for verification. This can cause problems at work. Make it easy, bring a stub!

New Arrests, Citations, and Orders

You must report all new arrests, citations (tickets), and court orders to your office within 72 hours or receiving them. In some cases, you may have to have someone else call your officer. Don't try to hide anything from the officer. Your officer will check your court record monthly and will find new arrests, citations and orders if you have gotten any. Be honest and tell your officer, no matter how small the violation was.

Just Hanging Out

Your conditions of supervision state that you may not associate with known felons. This is for your protection. Often, the same old friends lead to the same old habits. Sometimes, just being around when something goes wrong leaves you “holding the bag.” The easiest way to avoid this is by following your conditions. Not knowing a person is a felon, does not mean you haven't broken the rules. It is your responsibility to ask. The best rule is that if you aren't sure about someone, don't hang around with them. Find activities that interest you, but that keep you away from illegal and inappropriate people, places, and events. If you need help with finding activities to fill your free time, ask your officer for suggestions in your community.

Violations and Punishments

When you violate your conditions of supervision, your officer will determine what consequences should follow based on circumstances, policies, and orders from the court or parole board. Some violations will not automatically get you locked up, but EVERY violation will have consequences. Some of the consequences that may result include:

1. Verbal warning
2. Referral to treatment
3. Referral to intensive treatment
4. Being placed on curfew
5. Having to report more often
6. Having to do community service hours
7. Having to report daily
8. Being placed on electronic monitoring
9. Being locked up pending the parole board or judge's order

While your officer may use alternatives to incarceration, the officer will always consider all circumstances in making a decision. Therefore, the best rule is not to risk it.

Grievances

If you feel that you are not being treated fairly by Division of Probation and Parole staff or have a complaint about the way we operate, there is a procedure in place to file a grievance and have your issue addressed. This process begins when you notify your officer that you want to file a grievance. Grievances are governed by time limits, so this should be done as soon as you see a problem starting. If your officer cannot help you with your problem, ask to speak with the district supervisor. The complete policy on grievances is available from your officer or at one of our offices.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Can I move to another area or state?

A. Yes, you can apply for transfer to another area or state through your officer. All transfers are subject to acceptance by the receiving area.

Q. May I reside with someone in my family or household who is a convicted felon?

A. Yes, unless they are a co-defendant or your officer has other issues with this living situation.

Q. Can I go to a restaurant that serves alcohol?

A. Yes, as long as that restaurant's primary commodity is not alcohol and you do not consume.

Q. What if someone in my home uses or possesses alcohol?

A. This must be discussed with your officer and will depend on your past history and circumstances.

Q. What if I sometimes live at home and sometimes with a girlfriend acquaintance or other family member?

A. You must live fulltime at only one residence unless permission is obtained from you officer. Prior approval must be obtained for any overnight stays outside your residence.

Q. Can I ride to the Probation and Parole Office/Treatment with another convicted felon?

A. Prior permission must be obtained from your Officer.

Q. Will being around someone who uses marijuana cause my drug test to be positive?

A. No. The idea of a "contact buzz" is not true. Also, you should not be associating with someone who is using marijuana.

Q. Can I take over the counter/non-prescriptive medications?

A. Yes, when they are used in accordance with the proper dosage as listed on the label and they do not contain any alcohol or narcotics.

Q. If I own firearms or ammunition how should I dispose of them?

A. They should be removed from your property immediately by a family member or another non-felon acquaintance.

Conclusion

Hopefully this booklet has given you some valuable information. Remember that every case is different and every person is unique, so listen carefully as your officer explains your case and your conditions to you. If you still have questions, please be sure to ask until you get the answer. Not knowing the answer is never an excuse for not succeeding. Finally remember, **if you succeed, we succeed!**